



Department of Justice

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Middle District of Florida

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**18-MONTH INVESTIGATION FOCUSING ON DAYTONA BEACH GANG
CULMINATES IN ARREST OF DOZENS OF
ARMED NARCOTIC TRAFFICKING SUSPECTS**

Orlando, FL - United States Attorney A. Brian Albritton, Special Agent in Charge Virginia O'Brien, U.S. Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, and Explosives (ATF), Tampa Field Division, Police Chief Michael Chitwood, Daytona Beach Police Department, and State Attorney R. J. Larizza, 7th Judicial Circuit, announce the culmination of an 18-month-long investigation into violent, gang-related gun and drug crimes in the Daytona Beach community. Much of the effort focused on the Daytona Weed and Seed area, a three-mile-square area in both the New Town and Old Town areas of Daytona Beach near International Speedway Boulevard.

This investigation was designated Operation 819 because much of the illegal activity it concerned was related to an organized gang known as the "819 Boyz." Arrests resulting from the investigation started yesterday and are ongoing. 20 individuals have been indicted federally in connection with the Operation on a variety of gun and drug charges. 22 more are being charged by the State. Criminal activity revealed during the undercover portion of the Operation included the sale of 78 firearms and the purchase of 1,200 grams of crack cocaine.

U.S. Attorney Albritton stated: "With Operation 819, the Daytona Police Department, together with our federal partners at ATF, has done a great job weeding out the criminal element that plagues its community. At the same time, Chief Chitwood and his department have been seeding the affected neighborhoods with programs reaching out to the young people who are the foundation of Daytona Beach's future."

Virginia O'Brien, Special Agent in Charge, ATF Tampa Field Division, stated: "Today, Daytona Beach is a safer place to live and work. The violence perpetuated upon the citizens of Daytona Beach by the 819 gang is over. ATF recognizes the bravery and sacrifice of the Daytona Beach police officers and ATF agents who committed themselves to the 18-month effort. The prosecution of these criminals by both the United States Attorney's Office and the State Attorney's Office will ensure that 819 will be off the streets of Daytona Beach for a long time."

Police Chief Chitwood stated: "This operation is an unprecedented cooperative effort between the Daytona Beach Police Department and the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, and Explosives to attack violent, armed drug dealing gang members who erode the quality of life and safety of our citizens. An operation of this magnitude and focus has never been conducted in this City and could never have been successful without the commitment of ATF."

The Operation 819 investigation was led by ATF with the cooperation of the Daytona Beach Police Department. The resulting federal cases will be prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorneys Vincent Citro, Bishop Ravenel, Robert Bodnar, Sandra Deisler, Tanya Davis Wilson, Vincent Chiu, and Jackson Boggs. The state cases will be prosecuted by the State Attorney's Office in the 7th Judicial Circuit.

The federal cases resulting from Operation 819 are part of the Department of Justice's "Project Safe Neighborhoods" program – a nationwide, gun-violence reduction strategy led by ATF. United States Attorney A. Brian Albritton, along with Virginia O'Brien, Special Agent in Charge, ATF Tampa Field Division, is coordinating the Project Safe Neighborhoods effort here in the Middle District of Florida in cooperation with federal, state, and local law enforcement officials.

A federal indictment is merely a formal charge that a defendant has committed a violation of the federal criminal laws, and every defendant is presumed innocent unless, and until, proven guilty.